

**Federal Executive Board - Administrative Services Meeting
June 11,2003 - 1:00 to 3:30 pm - Edith Green Federal Building**

Topic: Implementing the FAIR Act - Competitive Sourcing Progress and Lessons Learned

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Summary: Agency shared experiences in implementing the Act, conducting studies,
future plans, and lessons learned.

Discussion:

The FY '03 Competitive Sourcing program of work for the Forest Service is our first year of actual studies, and is comprised of two approaches.

The first category is those that have been identified as national in scope. One is a small study on the work of a content analysis team of approximately 50 FTE's and is a direct I conversion, another is a national study of Job Corps but separated in to 18 streamlined studies covering approximately 940 FTE's, and one is a large study in scope and FTE's on IRM infrastructure work involving approximately 1300 FTE's across the country.

The second approach is nationally defined work areas for study (for '03, Road, Building, Trail, Fleet, Water, and Grounds Maintenance) but approach and accomplishment of those studies is delegated to each of the Regions. Here in Region 6 (Washington and Oregon) we currently have 48 studies underway in these work areas broken down by geographic area. There are 44 Express, 4 Streamline, and 1 Direct Conversion covering 240 FTE's. We are partnering with BLM on 3 of these studies. These maintenance studies are expected to cover approximately 1655 FTE's nationwide.

The agency has requested waivers to continue to operate under the old rules for everything except for the IRM study.

The national leadership of the Forest Service is currently considering options for '04 and '05 studies with a decision and announcement expected in July for approximately 2000 FTE's in '04 and 3000 FTE's in '05.

Challenges we face:

- ✍ Resources - As this is our first year under the new competitive sourcing focus, extent of resources necessary to coordinate and complete all phases of these studies was not well understood. Managing the study area technical resources necessary to have valid studies while keeping that program of work operating and delivering on a daily basis has been a real struggle. As difficult as that is, I think the biggest challenge has been in finding the Acquisition Management resources necessary to support the studies. This is an area that

is already understaffed and we are experiencing other work increases besides competitive sourcing.

- ✍ Although there are solid reasons for approaching the IRM study as one national study, we found that there were no other precedents in terms of size, scope, diversity of program, and geographical dispersion. This has presented many challenges in terms of approaches, analysis tools, and available consultant advice.
- ✍ With the smaller studies the sheer number of teams that had to be established, trained, and led through the process has been overwhelming for coordinators. Because of the completion target of September 30, we've not yet been able to assess the wisdom of the different approaches selected.
- ✍ Being new to this business, it has been a steep learning curve and a challenge to understand the nuances buried in the Rule, and the difference in the new rule, as it relates to getting to the core of providing efficiencies to the agency.

Lessons Learned:

- ✍ Most are still to come
- ✍ Staff time to pull it off can be easily underestimated
- ✍ The number of positions studied is always much larger than the number of FTE .
- ✍ Culture change is a bigger issue than many in that there is no going back, and life, as we know it, changes. Even in the case of an MEO win - it changes to a more contract like relationship. This is a difficult concept to accept for managers and employees alike.

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